

CCA-Treated Lumber

What is CCA-treated lumber?

- Chromated copper arsenate (CCA) is a chemical found in treated lumber commonly used to make outdoor products such as playground equipment, garden beds, picnic tables and decks.
- CCA is a combination of three chemicals: chromium, copper and arsenic.
- CCA protects wood from a variety of insects, fungi and organisms that can cause deterioration.

How can arsenic and chromium affect my family's health?

- Although there have been laboratory studies that demonstrate health effects on adults, there is no reliable information about how the chemicals may affect children.
- Arsenic and chromium are known human carcinogens that can be toxic to the skin and internal organs.
- Daily contact with arsenic that has seeped from CCA-treated lumber may, after many years of daily contact, lead to an increased risk for cancer or other long-term health effects.
- Chromium is present in CCA-treated lumber in more than one form. To be safe, one should assume the toxic form of chromium is present.
- Contact with arsenic may irritate the stomach, intestines and skin, damage blood vessel damage and impair nerve function.
- Swallowing large amounts of chromium has caused stomach upsets, ulcers, convulsions and kidney and liver damage.

How can exposure to CCA be reduced?

- CCA residues are easily transferred from the wood's surface onto hands and clothing. Because it is possible for a child to come in contact with CCA-treated lumber structures at home, on the playground or at school, make it a habit to:
 - Remove their shoes after activity on CCA-treated lumber structures to keep from tracking CCA residues indoors.
 - Discourage children from putting their hands in their mouth during play and wash their hands after playing on CCA-treated lumber structures, especially before eating.
 - Change a child's clothes as soon as possible after playing on CCA-treated wood products.

How can I reduce releases of CCA into the environment?

- Release of CCA from treated wood is caused by the elements, including rain and snowfall. This can lead to contamination of soil or other materials located near CCA-treated lumber. Make it a habit to:
 - Keep children and pets out of areas beneath structures made from CCA-treated lumber.
 - Avoid growing edible plants near CCA-treated decks.
 - Insert a plastic liner between the soil and CCA-treated lumber used to make a garden bed.
 - Apply a sealant to CCA-treated lumber structures once a year, although for some products once every two years may be sufficient (for example, a polyurethane sealant may provide up to 95 percent reduction in released CCA chemicals for as long as two years). A colored sealant aids in determining wear and weathering.
- Using CCA-treated lumber to build outdoor projects does involve some risk. Make it a habit to:
 - Wear a dust mask when cutting or sanding CCA-treated lumber.
 - Work over a drop cloth when cutting or sanding CCA-treated lumber so sawdust can be easily collected.
 - Avoid using CCA-treated lumber pieces for composting or mulching and never burn CCA-treated lumber.
 - Wash your hands and clothes after working with CCA-treated lumber.

Is there a medical test to determine whether I have been exposed to CCA?

There are tests that measure arsenic and chromium in the hair, urine and blood. However, because one form of chromium is an essential nutrient, low levels of chromium are found in blood and urine. Call your local health department or your physician for more information about this test.

Where can I get more information?

The U.S. EPA recently announced an industry-supported phase out of the production of CCA-treated lumber for residential uses. The phase out and new labeling requirements specifying no use of CCA will be implemented by the wood-treating industry for residential purposes effective Jan. 1, 2004. More information on the phasing out of CCA-treated wood is available at www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/1file.htm or by contacting IDEM or the Indiana State Department of Health.

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